

II. All avian orders except Apterygiformes, with specimens from all continents except the Antarctic, are represented in it. The Krakow school shows a specialization in the study of fossil birds. Therefore, the collection serves as a reference when fossil and subfossil avian remains are to be identified and studied.

The skin collection once established by collectors as J. SAGAN and K. WODZICKI now contains c. 1400 specimens in c. 250 species. They are mostly specimens from south-eastern Poland and the present-day eastern Ukraine (plus a few from North Korea).

The former private collection of K. WODZICKI counts over 2,300 eggs of 276 Palearctic forms (predominantly originating from SE Poland and Western Ukraine) and, additionally, there are some other smaller private collections of European bird's eggs and nests (approx 500 specimens, over 100 species, plus a few gathered in recent times in North Korea).

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3. THE UPPER SILESIAN MUSEUM AT BYTOM

The Nature History Department of the provincial museum contains over 6 000 avian specimens, in the following categories:

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------|----|----------------|
| Skins | 1,104 | in | 212 species |
| Mounts | 884 | in | c. 300 species |
| Eggs | 3,821 | in | 214 species |
| Nests | 234 | in | 77 species |
| Skeletons, skulls | 140 | in | c. 50 species |

About 77 % of skins and mounted specimens come from areas within the present Polish boundaries, chiefly from the province of Silesia (67 %), the remaining ones are from Europe and Asia. Some common breeding species are represented by series of 10-50 specimens per species. The oldest specimens are dated from the 1880s. The present collection originates from two ancient collections from the Landesmuseum in Beuthen/Bytom and the Silesian Museum in Katowice as well as from several smaller Upper Silesian local collections recently combined.

Some specimens, such as two vulture species, *Tetrax tetrax*, *Stercorarius skua*, *St. pomarinus*, *Pastor roseus*, constitute the invaluable documents for an occurrence of these rare visitors in Silesia. The main collectors included: E. DRESCHER, O. NATORP, GEDROY, S. SOBANIA and M. BIELEWICZ. Exotic species are represented by approx 130 mounted specimens from the Island of Borneo.

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4. THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AT THE WROCLAW UNIVERSITY

The University of Wrocław houses the second largest collection in Poland, after that of Warsaw. It constitutes a part of the Zoological Collection of the former Zoologisches Museum der Universität Breslau, founded in 1814. Its long history was written by many eminent directors, including the professors A.E. GRUBE, W. KÜKENTHAL, F. PAX and W. RYDZEWSKI. According to its first director, J. L. C. GRAVENHORST, already in 1832 the ornithological section contained 1739 bird skins and some eggs, nests and skeletons. The collection significantly increased during the first half of the 20th century, chiefly after the inclusion of two large private collections, that of P. KOLLIBAY and a part of O. NATORP's. Both these owners collected mostly Palaearctic species, but P. KOLLIBAY was also able to preserve series of skins from a SE-Asian archipelago.

During the Breslau siege in 1944-45 the collection was seriously damaged (a part of the building was hit by a bomb): about half the specimens from the scientific part and the majority of the exhibition specimens were destroyed.

At present the collection counts c. 12,500 skins and mounted specimens of c. 2,460 species, mostly from the Palaearctic region, plus some from the Philippines, SE-Asia, Africa and South America. However, roughly only two third of the specimens are provided with complete labels indicating the place and time of collecting. Series larger than 20 specimens are available only in approx 100, mainly Palaearctic, species.

There are no type specimens in the collection, only single specimens representing extinct species, such as *Pinquius inpenis* (2 ex.), *Comuropsis carolinensis*, *Ectopistes migratorius*, *Heteralocha acutirostris* (female), and *Vauellus macropterus*.

Among the approx 1,000 mounts there are representatives of c. 90 % of the world's bird families. Currently many of them are on display in an exhibition.

The scientific part of the collection further contains over 2,000 clutches and many single eggs, some nests and c. 100 bird skeletons or skulls (some exhibited in the vertebrate skeletons hall). The most valuable object is a well preserved egg shell of the *Aepyornis maximus* (Fig.1).

While our museum as a whole has recently grown up to hold approx 2 million zoological specimens, largely invertebrates, the collection of higher vertebrates has hardly seen an increase owing to reasons indicated above. The avian collection, chiefly the bird skins, are currently used only to solve some rare